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January 20, 2010

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**"Louisianians share a bond forged by tragedy with the people of Haiti, as we have also experienced devastating natural disasters that have taken lives and leveled communities," said Rep. Melancon. "Many of the doctors, nurses, first responders and relief organizations who came to our aid after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita are now helping the people of Haiti in the wake of their earthquake.**

**"While most of us can't jump on a plane to deliver food and water to the thousands struggling to stay alive, we can still help. I urge all Louisianians to show their generous spirit and do what they can to assist the Haitian people."**

Congressman Melancon has also created [a page on his website](#) linking constituents to information on the earthquake in Haiti and how they can help the relief efforts. The page can be accessed by clicking on the "Earthquake in Haiti" button at [www.melancon.house.gov](http://www.melancon.house.gov).

The January 12th earthquake was the worst disaster to hit Haiti in over two centuries, with close to 200,000 deaths, more than 1.5 million people left homeless, and severe damage to roads, ports, hospitals, and homes. Nearly one-third of Haiti's population has been directly affected by the 7.0 earthquake on January 12, 2010 in Haiti - the poorest, least developed country in the Western Hemisphere.

This bill would also make clear that taxpayers making a charitable contribution to victims of the Haiti earthquake through a text message will be able to rely on their cell phone bill when claiming a charitable contribution.

Donors have already contributed more than \$220 million to major U.S. relief groups, with \$22 million made through cell phone text messages. [Chronicle of Philanthropy]

In 2005, Congress enacted similar legislation for charitable contributions that were made to victims of the Indian Ocean tsunami that struck in December of 2004. That bill, H.R. 241 in the 109th Congress, passed the House of Representatives without objection and subsequently passed the Senate by unanimous consent.

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